

Appropriations Committee Testimony, February 17, 2017

Re: Strengthen Funding for DEEP and CEQ!

Good morning,

In this time of unprecedented division in the US, it seems we have fewer and fewer things in common. So what do we really have in common in Connecticut; what do we all share?

- Not politics,
- Not religion,
- Not ethnicity,
- We're even divided on sports teams.

What we ALL share in common in Connecticut is our *land, water* and *air*. Surely we can agree that these, which physically define Connecticut, should be top priority for protecting and enhancing. We therefore should support the agencies that work hard for our shared environment, specifically the DEEP and CEQ.

For many years, DEEP has been hit with repeated budget cuts, putting the protection of our common air, water, and public lands at risk. Actually, DEEP has offered revenue-generating solutions to alleviate budget pressures. Let's look carefully at these and think creatively about making this department strong and vibrant. The Appropriations Committee needs to do everything it can to safeguard our environment and state park system. The Council on Environmental Quality is another important agency for all of us in Connecticut. Although small, it "punches above its weight" in its effectiveness: a budgetary bargain! The CEQ is the only independent board that advises state agencies on the environmental impacts of proposed construction projects, recommends improvements to state environmental programs, and investigates citizen complaints of violations of environmental laws. This gutsy group should be strengthened, not eliminated!

I hope passionately that you, the Appropriations Committee realize that our future in Connecticut is shared, and there is no more basic and important a thing in the state than our environment.

Thank you for your work to make Connecticut a better place.

Yours most sincerely,

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